

**September 13th, 2012**

*- As Prepared For Delivery -*

"While I would much prefer to be doing our regular bills, I support this CR. H.J. Res. 117 avoids a government shutdown by continuing the full range of federal activities at last year's rate of operations, plus six-tenths of one percent. The CR also preserves the agreement on spending levels and the reforms in budgeting for disaster relief as set out in the Budget Control Act.

"On defense, the CR caps overseas contingency operations (OCO) at the President's request for FY 2013 of \$88.5 billion instead of continuing last year's level of \$115.1 billion, a reduction of \$26.6 billion. The CR grants some flexibility for transferring funds within OCO, since last year's priorities do not meet this year's defense needs in the region. Beyond that, however, the CR is stringent on defense. DOD requested limited authority for new starts and changes in production and procurement rates. Those requests were all denied.

"The CR includes only a handful of spending anomalies, providing additional funding only where absolutely necessary.

"Wildland fire suppression receives more funds than last year's level. The Interior Department and the Forest Service have already spent all their FY 2012 fire suppression funding in addition to \$400 million that was reprogrammed to respond to a harsh fire season. VA operating expenses are also increased because disability claims are expected to increase significantly in FY 2013 as more vets return. Without an increase above last year's level, the launch schedule for weather satellites would be delayed, causing significant gaps in data collection essential for severe weather forecasting. Increases are provided for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, child nutrition, and Commodity Supplemental Food program, which all need additional funds to meet current caseloads.

"There are even fewer extensions of expiring authorizations. Only those affecting spending are addressed. The CR includes a clean 6-month extension of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. Without the extension, cash assistance and work support for working families would

stop in FY 2013. The CR also specifies the LIHEAP State allocation formula to ensure that States receive adequate funding for the winter heating season.

"I must mention two concerns. First, I am very disappointed that we have yet to enact a single FY13 bill in this Congress. I know Chairman Rogers shares my disappointment. A CR is not a replacement for the appropriations process. Federal agencies need much more direction than what is provided in a CR and I believe this measure serves to underscore the need for timely regular order bills.

"Lastly, I am deeply concerned that the threat of a sequester inhibits economic growth and job creation. The sooner we deal with all the fiscal cliff issues, the sooner our economic recovery will be strengthened. Just yesterday, Moody's threatened a potential downgrade of the U.S. government's credit rating in 2013 if the fiscal cliff is not addressed. I wish we could turn off sequestration in this CR and enact a balanced package of deficit reduction to replace it. Unfortunately, any serious discussion seems impossible until after the election.

"As Chairman Rogers said, this is a streamlined CR, free of any new riders, and negotiated in a bipartisan fashion. For that reason, I urge my colleagues to support it."